

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 207953
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TO HICOMTERPACIS SAIPAN MARIANA ISLANDS PRIORITY 0000

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OGEN TQ

SUBJECT: PRESS RELEASE

DOTA NO.

1. TO HICOM WINKEL, TTPI. PLS PASS TO GEORGE CALLISON.
FOLLOWING IS PROPOSED INTERIOR PRESS RELEASE ON BIKINI. IT
IS NOT, REPEAT NOT, TO BE RELEASED UNTIL AUG. 25, 1978.

EDITORS NOTE: THE MARSHALL ISLANDS ARE WEST OF THE INTER-
NATIONAL DATELINE. RELOCATION OPERATIONS WILL BEGIN ON
SUNDAY, AUGUST 27, MARSHALL ISLANDS TIME.

"THE RELOCATION OF 145 PEOPLE LIVING ON BIKINI ISLAND WILL
BEGIN TOMORROW. BIKINI ATOLL STILL CONTAINS RADIOACTIVE
HEALTH HAZARDS AS A RESULT OF NUCLEAR TESTING CONDUCTED
THERE MORE THAN THIRTY YEARS AGO.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 207953

"BIKINI ATOLL IS PART OF THE MARSHALL ISLAND GROUP IN THE
TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS ADMINISTERED BY THE
UNITED STATES UNDER A TRUSTEESHIP AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED
NATIONS.

"IN 1946 THE U.S. ASKED THE PEOPLE OF BIKINI FOR PERMISSION

TO USE THE ATOLL AS A TESTING AREA. THE PEOPLE AGREED TO LEAVE BIKINI AND WERE ULTIMATELY SETTLED ON KILI ISLAND IN THE SOUTHERN MARSHALLS.

"RADIOLOGICAL SURVEYS PERFORMED BY THE U.S. ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION IN 1968 SAID BIKINI WAS AGAIN SAFE FOR HUMAN HABITATION AND PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON ORDERED A COMPLETE REHABILITATION OF THE ATOLL. PLANS WERE MADE TO CREATE A MODEL COMMUNITY ON THE ISLAND AND THEN RETURN THE BIKINIANS TO THEIR TRADITIONAL HOME.

"WHEN RESTORATION WORK BEGAN IN 1970, BIKINI ISLANDERS FROM KILI WERE HIRED TO ASSIST IN THE REHABILITATION PROJECT. THEY GRADUALLY BROUGHT THEIR FAMILIES AND OTHER RELATIVES TO BIKINI. IT IS THIS GROUP, NOW NUMBERING 145, THAT WILL BE REJOINED WITH THE 400 BIKINIANS ON KILI.

"THE RELOCATION IS BEING DIRECTED BY MR. ADRIAN P. WINKEL, HIGH COMMISSIONER OF THE TRUST TERRITORY, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE OFFICE OF TERRITORIAL AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.

"LINGERING RADIATION WAS DISCOVERED ON BIKINI ISLAND WHEN THE PEOPLE DECIDED IN 1974 TO HAVE SOME OF THE NEW HOUSES BEING BUILT BY THE GOVERNMENT ERECTED IN THE INTERIOR PART OF THE ISLAND.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 207953

"SINCE INLAND AREAS HAD NOT BEEN CONSIDERED FOR RESIDENTIAL PURPOSES BEFORE, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT DECIDED TO CONDUCT A FULL RADIOLOGICAL SURVEY BEFORE THE START OF INLAND CONSTRUCTION.

"THE SURVEY, COMPLETED IN JUNE, 1975, REVEALED THAT THE INTERIOR COULD NOT BE USED FOR RESIDENTIAL PURPOSES. IT ALSO SHOWED THAT FOOD PLANTS WERE RECYCLING RADIONUCLIDES FROM THE ISLAND'S SOIL.

"FOOD SUBSIDIES HAVE BEEN PROVIDED TO BIKINI RESIDENTS SINCE 1972 AND AFTER THE 1975 SURVEY THEY WERE CAUTIONED NOT TO EAT LOCALLY-GROWN FOODS.

"FISH IN THE WATERS AROUND BIKINI ARE THOUGHT TO BE SAFE TO EAT, BUT FRUITS, VEGETABLES AND COCONUT CRABS FOUND ON THE ISLAND ARE CONTAMINATED.

"IN NOVEMBER, 1977, THE TRUST TERRITORY GOVERNMENT INSTITUTED A COMPLETE FEEDING PROGRAM FOR ALL RESIDENTS OF BIKINI.

"REGULAR HEALTH MONITORING IN APRIL OF THIS YEAR REVEALED AN INCREASE IN THE LEVEL OF CESIUM-137 IN THE BODIES OF SOME BIKINIANS DESPITE THE DIET OF IMPORTED FOODSTUFFS.

"THE POTENTIAL DANGER IS CONSIDERED TO BE MUCH MORE SERIOUS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND SINCE NEARLY HALF OF THE ISLAND'S CURRENT RESIDENTS ARE UNDER FIFTEEN YEARS OF AGE, EARLY RELOCATION OF THE ENTIRE POPULATION WAS GIVEN A HIGH PRIORITY BY TRUST TERRITORY AND INTERIOR DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS.

"IN JUNE OF THIS YEAR HIGH COMMISSIONER WINKEL TRAVELED TO BIKINI TO REPORT THE HEALTH MONITORING FINDINGS TO THE UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 207953

PEOPLE THERE. AS A RESULT OF HIS MEETINGS WITH THE BIKINI PEOPLE, WINKEL DECIDED THAT THEY SHOULD BE REUNITED WITH THE BIKINI COMMUNITY ON KILI.

"UNDER SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR JAMES A. JOSEPH AND RUTH G. VAN CLEVE, DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF TERRITORIAL AFFAIRS LEFT WASHINGTON, D.C. ON AUGUST 4 AND WENT TO KILI TO INSPECT THE TEMPORARY HOUSING AND OTHER FACILITIES BEING CONSTRUCTED THERE BY THE TRUST TERRITORY GOVERNMENT.

"MR. JOSEPH AND MS. VAN CLEVE THEN TRAVELED TO BIKINI ON AUGUST 11, TO MEET WITH THE ISLANDERS AND ASSURE THEM THAT THE RELOCATION WAS NECESSARY FOR HEALTH REASONS. JOSEPH AND VAN CLEVE ALSO VISITED OTHER DISTRICTS IN THE TRUST TERRITORY.

"BIKINI ATOLL IS BEING RE-SURVEYED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, USING ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY THAT IS SIGNIFICANTLY MORE ACCURATE AND RELIABLE THAN THAT AVAILABLE FOR THE 1968 SURVEY.

"THE NEW TECHNIQUE USES GAMMA-RAY DETECTORS MOUNTED ON AIRCRAFT. IT WAS RECENTLY USED TO SURVEY ENEWETAK ATOLL.

"THE AERIAL SURVEY BY DOE BEGAN ON JULY 31, AND WILL INCLUDE BIKINI ATOLL AND THE NORTHERN MARSHALL ISLANDS. SURVEY RESULTS ARE EXPECTED BY SPRING, 1979.

"MEANWHILE, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS ON KILI ARE BEING CAREFULLY EXAMINED AND EVERY EFFORT IS BEING MADE BY THE TRUST TERRITORY GOVERNMENT AND THE INTERIOR DEPARTMENT TO ACCOMMODATE THE ARRIVING BIKINIANS WITH MINIMAL DISRUPTION TO THEIR LIFESTYLE AND CULTURE. UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 05 STATE 207953

"PLANS FOR THE PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT OF THE BIKINI PEOPLE WILL INCLUDE EXTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF FACILITIES ON KILI.

"RELOCATION OPERATIONS BEGIN TOMORROW (SUNDAY, AUGUST 27, 1978, MARSHALL ISLANDS TIME) AT MAJURO ISLAND, DISTRICT CENTER OF THE MARSHALLS.

"THREE SHIPS WILL SAIL FROM MAJURO TO BIKINI TO TRANSPORT THE PEOPLE AND THEIR POSSESSIONS TO KILI ISLAND.

"REPRESENTATIVES OF VIRTUALLY EVERY MAJOR NEWS-GATHERING ORGANIZATION IN THE U.S., EUROPE AND ASIA ARE ABOARD ONE OF THE SHIPS TO OBSERVE AND REPORT ON THE RELOCATION.

"THE VESSELS ARE EXPECTED TO ARRIVE AT KILI ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, AND RETURN TO MAJURO ON LABOR DAY, SEPTEMBER 4." GEORGE MILNER, ACTING DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF TERRITORIAL AFFAIRS SENDS. CHRISTOPHER

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